120 exhibitors expected at interVIEW

27 Nov 2006

Almost 120 exhibitors are expected to attend leathergoods fair interVIEW, which will be held on January 26-28, in Offenbach, Germany. The show will feature bags, travel and outdoor goods and sports items.

Other highlights will include a forum on 'global connections' and a 'material and accessories' trend meeting.

Outlast Technologies relaunches its website

27 Nov 2006

US-based Outlast Technologies, Inc., known for its phase change materials, has relaunched its website in an attempt to make it more user-friendly for customers and add marketing benefits for brand partners.

Particular attention has been paid to the business-to-business section, where Outlast brand licensees can access a complete marketing programme that includes the ability to download pictures, hang tags and labels, as well as order various display materials.

Multiple trade agreements between China and Pakistan set to benefit the leather sector

27 Nov 2006

A recently signed series of trade agreements and memoranda of understanding between Pakistan and China included a landmark Free Trade Agreement (FTA) that could triple bilateral trade to $15 billion within five years. Pakistan is also expecting an inflow of investment of about $6 billion during this period.

Under the new agreements, Pakistan will have duty-free access to China's market for products such as leather articles, sports goods, cotton fabrics, iron and steel products and engineering goods. China will also reduce its tariff by 50% on products including leather goods, knitwear, woven garments, plastic products and rubber products. China, in turn, will have free access to Pakistan's machinery, organic and inorganic chemicals, and raw materials markets for various industries.

The first phase of the bilateral FTA applies to trade in goods and investment, with a second phase covering services due to be negotiated during 2007.

Call for more technology and logistics investment in India's retail sector

27 Nov 2006

India's commerce and industry minister, Kamal Nath, has called for more technology, logistics and cold chain infrastructure investment—chilled and frozen foods are not household staples yet in China—in the country's retail sector, rather than just in construction and buildings. Speaking at the India Economic Summit, he pointed to the joint venture plans of Bharti Enterprises and Wal-Mart Stores as two cases in point. Both companies have recently signed a Memorandum of Understanding for collaboration in India.

The Minister also commented on accusations of Indian protectionism, saying that it is developed countries that are putting up trade barriers by allowing imports of raw leather from India at 0% duty while a finished leather coat attracts 35% duty in the USA. He also stressed the need for rule-based globalisation, demanding more transparency in anti-dumping to protect domestic markets against the flood of subsidised imports.

Italian department store launches in Riyadh

27 Nov 2006

Italian department store Bernardi opened in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, this month offering a range of goods that include fashion garments and footwear.

With over 167 stores throughout Italy, this is the company's first overseas store, although others are now planned across the Middle East and in the UK. The stores are being opened in association with Saudi-Arabia-based AFG.

Gap issues factory inspection and performance data

27 Nov 2006

Gap Inc. has released its latest factory inspection and performance data as part of its social responsibility commitment.

The data includes the most recent results of the company's inspections in the factories that make its

clothes, including data on factory approvals and terminations. It states that the company's team of vendor compliance officers conducted 4,438 factory inspections in 2118 garment factories around the world in 2005, accounting for 98.7% of all garment factories approved for Gap Inc. production.

During this time it terminated business with 62 factories, or about 2.9%, of the company's approved base for violations of its code of vendor conduct.

Gap issues social responsibility reports biannually, with the next scheduled for release in 2007.

Warnaco appoints new president of Chaps

27 Nov 2006

The Warnaco Group, Inc. has appointed David Cunningham as president of its Chaps division. Mr Cunningham will oversee all aspects of design, development, merchandising, marketing and sales for the Chaps brand in the United States, Canada and Mexico.

He joins Warnaco from Paul Davril, Inc., where he served as group president for the Kenneth Cole men's and women's brands, as well as for Ecko Red. He previously worked for Timberland, as senior vice president of its apparel division, and for Tommy Hilfiger USA, where he was senior vice president of Tommy Hilfiger Jeans.

Lanxess to transfer Technical Services to separate entity

27 Nov 2006

Germany-based chemicals group Lanxess plans to transfer its Technical Services group function to a separate legal entity. This wholly-owned subsidiary is scheduled to change internally to a new work-time and service model by January 1, 2007.

The agreement is still to be approved by the company's Central Works Council and the German Mine, Chemical and Power Workers' Union (IG BCE).

The approximately 700 employees working for the Technical Services group function and the maintenance units in the business units will be transferred to the new company.

The Technical Services group function supports Lanxess' business units worldwide, providing a range of services essential for the production and supply of chemical products. These include operating workshops and the maintenance of production facilities.

Penford holds groundbreaking ceremony at Ethanol facility

28 Nov 2006

US-based global producers of ingredient systems for industrial and food applications Penford Corporation has held the groundbreaking ceremony for its new ethanol production facility at its Cedar Rapids, Iowa, USA, plant. The new facility involves $42 million investment that will produce approximately 40 million gallons of ethanol. The plant is expected to be on stream by the end of 2007.

Penford develops and manufactures specialty natural-based ingredient systems for various applications, including textiles and papermaking. It has nine locations worldwide in the United States, Australia and New Zealand.

New report released on advances in wearable technology

28 Nov 2006

Dublin-based market research company, Research and Markets has released a new study, "Wearable Computing (Technical Insights)".

The report is said to provide an overview of advances made in wearable computing technology along with key drivers, challenges, and restraints. It also offers an analysis of wearable computers as used in different applications as well as the factors that impact their long-term functionality.

Lion Apparel Asia-Pacific achieves ISO 9001 accreditation

28 Nov 2006

Uniform and personal protective equipment (PPE) company Lion Asia Pacific (LAP), has achieved ASNZS ISO 9001: 2000 Quality Management System (QMS) Certification for the company's laundering, repairing and supply of firefighting protective apparel to firefighting services. The certification is based on successful QMS audits performed by SAI Global in October. The company will now use this certification as a benchmark for managing, maintaining, and continuously improving quality assurance throughout all of its processes.

ISO 9001 allows Lion Asia Pacific to pursue tenders for state and federal government agencies where the accreditation is often mandatory.

A member of US-based Lion Apparel's International Protective Systems Group, LAP serves customers in Australia, Asia and the Pacific Islands with NFPA and EN-certified fire fighter protective clothing and helmets. It

also manages Lion TotalCare programmes for large fire service organisations such as the South Australian Metropolitan Fire Service the South Australian Country Fire Service and the New Zealand Fire Service.

Surge in sports store sales

28 Nov 2006

The Monthly Retail Trade Survey, prepared by the US Census Bureau, has reported sales from sporting goods stores of $2.9 billion (preliminary) for September—up 22.7% from $2.37 billion in September 2005. This increase follows a 13.9% increase in August.
Sales for the first nine months reached $25.1 billion, up 14.2% on the comparable period in 2005.

Total sales for calendar year 2005 reached $31 billion, up 7.3% from 2004. The 2005 overall retail growth represented the strongest increase since the 8.4% gain of 1999.

New additions to ReForm range from Texon

28 Nov 2006

Global manufacturer of structural component solutions for the footwear industry, Texon International, recently launched two new slimmer gauges under its Texon ReForm range. The new 1.2mm and 1.4mm gauges are designed to help manufacturers use the material across different footwear applications and to make shoes lighter and more comfortable. The product debuted at the recent Lineapelle fair in Bologna, Italy.

The company's 1.85mm guage is said to be most suited for ladies' and men's performance footwear, while the 1.6mm has been designed for children's, ladies' and men's lightweight performance footwear. The 1.4mm guage is also designed for children's, ladies' and men's lightweight performance footwear while the 1.2mm is best suited for children's and youth performance footwear.

ReForm is a range of thermoplastic materials with an extruded film central core sandwiched between a fusion-bonded, nonwoven fabric made from a blend of synthetic fibres filled with a styrene copolymer. Intended for counter pocket insertion, it adds hardness to the back part of the footwear and is resistant to moisture breakdown. It has been formulated to slip easily off the last when cold is available with hot melt "N" adhesive on both sides.

Vietnam, Laos hold exhibition to promote trade

29 Nov 2006

Over 100 Vietnamese and Laotian businesses will attend a trade fair in the Lao capital Vientiane from November 30 to December 5 under a programme to promote bilateral trade.

It is hoped that the exhibition will attract businesses from all sectors including the military, and clothing and textiles.

Ambitious export target set by Pakistan

29 Nov 2006

A new and ambitious export target has been set by the Pakistan government, which hopes to see exports rise from the current level of $16.5 billion to $43.3 billion by 2013. Efforts will be concentrated on increasing exports within key industries including textiles, leather and leather products, meat, sporting goods and furniture.

The seven-year export plan has been devised by the country's Planning Commission, which anticipates that GDP will grow by 15% during this period.

The export target for leather and leather products alone is $2.26 billion, an 11% increase compared with the current total of $1.09 billion.

New blacker fibre from RadiciSpandex

29 Nov 2006

Manufacturer of polyester- and polyether-based elastane fibres for yarn spinning RadiciSpandex Corp., a subsidiary of Italy-based The Radici Group, has launched a new black spandex fibre.

RadiciSpandex S-RB is said to produce a consistent shade of black that prevents 'grin-through' when the fabric is stretched. It can be used for sportswear and activewear as well as lingerie and swimwear.

The fibre is available in deniers ranging from 40 to 140 and the company plans to add further counts and colours in the future. It is produced in the USA and meets CAFTA, NAFTA and CBI standards.

Clariant declares support for bluesign standard

29 Nov 2006

Swiss specialty chemicals company Clariant International Ltd. has signed up to the bluesign standard, an independent industry textile standard. Bluesign

technologies was founded in 2000 and, since then, the standard has been adopted by a number of textile and chemical manufacturers such as Huntsman Textile Effects, Schoeller Textil AG, Christian Eschler AG as well as retailers such as Nike and Patagonia.

Commenting on the company's decision to support the standard, head of Textile Business at Clariant, Thomas Winkler, said that, "The establishment of the bluesign standard with its holistic approach…serves as a unique platform for all participants to economically source, manufacture and market products. Furthermore, it also includes a strong focus on health and safety issues as well as optimised resource consumption."

The standard addresses consumer safety, environmental and other health and safety issues within the textile production chain such as air and water emission and occupational health and resource management. It also focuses on 'Best Available Technology' to help to reduce resource consumption and global warming.

The standard also certifies chemical formulations and compounds that have been tested against harmful effects on humans and the environment.

Quiksilver forms new JV in Mexico

29 Nov 2006

Designer and producer of branded apparel, sports equipment, footwear and accessories Quiksilver, Inc. has formed a joint venture (JV) with PBM International to market, sell and distribute Quiksilver and Roxy branded products in Mexico. Quiksilver will hold a majority stake in the venture.

The JV will be responsible for establishing a Mexican distribution network of company-owned retail stores as well as a wholesale business that will include licensed retail stores, large key accounts and small independent retailers.

PBM International is a branded and licensed apparel marketing and distribution company in Mexico and distributes footwear, apparel and accessories under the names Le Coq Sportif, Arena, and FIFA.

Mogul Maniac launches snow gear collection

30 Nov 2006

US-based snow gear company Mogul Maniac has unveiled its latest collection for the 2006/07snowsports season. The range includes the latest version of its most popular product, The Clip, which is designed to prevent skiers and snowboarders from losing gloves, goggles and lift tickets.

The collection also features an up-dated line of fleece clothing, jackets, hats, T-shirts, watches and watch bands.

Sales increase at Zumiez

30 Nov 2006

Specialty retailer of action sports-related apparel, footwear, equipment and accessories Zumiez, Inc. has reported that net sales for the four-week period, ended November 25, increased 43.9% to $25.9 million, compared with $18 million reported for the comparable period in 2005. Comparable store sales increased 12.1%, compared with an increase of 18.8% in the year ago period.

Nilit presents new fashion concepts

30 Nov 2006

Israel-based producer of nylon 6.6 Nilit has introduced its new bodywear trend concepts for spring/summer 2008 and new activewear trends for autumn/winter 2008/09, both of which will be presented in the company's Trendbooks.

Its specialty fibres now include Sensil (the company's in-house brand), and Tactel, Supplex and Cordura yarns (which are Invista brands used under licence).

These yarns are used in varied applications from intimate apparel to activewear and offer a range of characteristics such as comfort, lightness and performance.

The Bodyfashion Trendbook defines three trends for spring/summer 2008: Picnic, Elegance and Tribal and the Activewear Trendbook defines four trends for autumn/winter 2008/09: Power Protection, City Dance, Take Time Off and High Endurance.

India's textile exports rise

30 Nov 2006

Following modest growth in 2003-04 and a decline during the 2004-05 fiscal period, India's textile exports have increased by nearly 22%. Exports during the 2005-2006 quota period reached $17.08 billion, up from $14.03 billion in 2004-05.

During the period April to July 2006 alone the textile sector registered over 16% growth, with textile exports reaching $6.1 billion.

India's National Textile Policy 2000 has set an export target of $50 billion by 2010.

Snapper Rock launches new sun protection clothing for babies and toddlers

30 Nov 2006

Snapper Rock has introduced a new UPF 50+ sun protection line for babies aged three months to two years. The line comprises one-piece sun suits, flap hats, tops and hot pants, and will go on sale in December in boutiques across the USA including Nordstrom and Babystyle.

Initially launched as a junior sailing wear company, Snapper Rock, with offices in New Zealand and the USA, now provides children's products for both in and out the water.

Isaac Daniel launches footwear with embedded GPS

30 Nov 2006

Design and technology company Isaac Daniel has developed a limited edition line of footwear with patented Quantum Satellite Technology with GPS tracking abilities. The Compass Global 1000, which will be launched in the USA early next year, features GPS technology embedded into seven different men's and women's sneaker models. Only 1,000 pairs will be produced. The footwear incorporates a microcomputer with satellite tracking communication that can activate a covert alarm locator if the wearer is in trouble. The alarm generates an emergency signal to the company's monitoring station, pinpointing the shoes' location. This information is then communicated to local authorities.

The company is currently in negotiations to market the technology to various sectors including the military, those who care for sufferers of Alzheimer's, and parents who want to keep track of their young children.

Jones Apparel makes new appointment to board of directors

30 Nov 2006

US designer and wholesaler of branded apparel, footwear and accessories Jones Apparel Group, Inc., has appointed Frits van Paasschen to its board of directors. With over 20 years experience in retail, operations and supply chain, consumer marketing and finance, Mr van Paasschen has held various management positions at companies such as Boston Consulting Group, First Call Corporation, Goldman, Sachs & Co. and McKinsey & Company. In 1998, he was appointed vice president, global strategic planning, for Nike, and served as its corporate vice president/general manager for Europe, the Middle East and Africa from 2000 to 2004. He is currently president and CEO of Coors Brewing Company and a member of the board of directors of performance optics company Oakley.

ITGLWF calls China's code of conduct 'unacceptable'

30 Nov 2006

The general secretary of the International Textile, Garment and Leather Workers' Federation (ITGLWF), Neil Kearney, has attacked the code of conduct recently created and implemented by the China National Textile and Apparel Council, claiming that it lacks credibility.

Addressing Chinese government leaders and industrialists during the Shenzhen forum on 'Building a Harmonious Society' in November, he said that much energy had gone into crafting the new code, CSC9000T, modelled on SA 8000. He added that, in its present form, however, without requiring the payment of a living wage and without allowing workers to become a member of a trade union of their own choosing, CSC9000T is not credible and will not satisfy consumers.

Mr Kearney said that consumers are now demanding that brands and retailers clean up their supply chain, and warned that codes such as the CSC9000T would not satisfy consumer pressure for acceptable production conditions— which is now one of the key elements of global competitiveness.

Hanesbrands to close Puerto Rico textile plant

01 Dec 2006

Underwear and outerwear apparel company Hanesbrands Inc. is to close its textile manufacturing plant at Ponce, Puerto Rico, and move production to an existing lower-cost facility in the Caribbean basin. Production at the plant, which makes fabric for T-shirts and underwear, will cease by the end of January 2007, with a loss of some 500 jobs.

The closure is part of the company's strategy to improve efficiency and competitiveness, which includes increasing high-volume, lower-cost production at its new textile manufacturing facilities in Central America and the Caribbean basin.

European Commission approves acquisition of Saurer

01 Dec 2006

The European Commission has cleared the proposed acquisition by Oerlikon Corporation AG, supplier of

high-tech coatings and components, of Switzerland-based Saurer AG, which manufactures textile machinery and transmission systems.

The Commission concluded that the transaction between the two Swiss companies would not significantly impede competition in the European Economic Area or any substantial part of it.

Dogi to acquire Elastic Fabrics of America

01 Dec 2006

Spanish manufacturer of elastic fabric for the underwear, swimwear and the sportswear markets Dogi International Fabrics, S.A. has signed a Letter of Intent to acquire stretch fabrics manufacturer Elastic Fabrics of America (EFA).

The acquisition will increase the size of Dogi's business by 20% and will make it the only stretch fabric producer covering the market across five continents.

Dogi has manufacturing plants in Spain, Germany, China, the Philippines and Thailand and is in the process of building a new plant in Sri Lanka. Its total annual production capacity exceeds 34 million metres of stretch fabrics that are marketed under the Dogi and Penn Elastic brands.

The acquisition cost is estimated at $33 million.

Improved results from The Finish Line

01 Dec 2006

US-based retailer of athletic apparel, footwear and accessories The Finish Line, Inc. has posted net sales of $281.5 million for the thirteen, weeks ended November 25—an increase of 2.7% compared with net sales of $274 million for the corresponding period last year. Total company comparable store sales for the quarter declined by 3.3%.

For the thirty-nine weeks ended November 25, consolidated net sales edged up slightly to $909.2 million, an increase of 0.3% compared with the $906.8 million reported for the prior year period. Year-to-date, comparable store sales decreased by 5.8% compared with an increase of 0.9% for the comparable thirty-nine week period last year.

Invista to Acquire Nylon 6 Business in Asia Pacific

01 Dec 2006

Integrated fibres and polymers company Invista recently completed a definitive agreement to acquire the assets of US-based technology company Honeywell International's nylon 6 bulked continuous filament (BCF) business in the Asia Pacific, including its plant in Shanghai. The acquisition will be made via a wholly foreign-owned enterprise in China and is expected to be completed in early 2007, subject to regulatory approvals and customary closing conditions.

The purchase will include a plant in Shanghai, which produces white dyeable and solution dyed nylon 6 BCF. It also has processing equipment to make heathered, twisted and heat-set yarns.

Sales increase at American Eagle Outfitters

01 Dec 2006

November sales for American Eagle Outfitters Inc., increased 21% to $247 million, compared with $203.5 million for November 2005. Comparable store sales increased 14% for the month. Year-to-date sales for the 43 weeks to November increased 18% to $2.07 billion, compared with $1.76 billion for same period in 2005, whilst comparable store sales increased 11%.

American Eagle Outfitters designs and sells its own brand of casual clothing, outerwear, footwear, and swimwear. It currently operates 836 stores.

Anti-dumping investigations decline

01 Dec 2006

The World Trade Organization (WTO) Secretariat has reported that in the period January 1 to June 30, the number of initiations of new anti-dumping investigations continued to decline, while the number of new final measures increased, relative to the corresponding period of 2005.

The report, based on the latest available figures, showed that 87 new investigations had been initiated during the first six months of this year, compared with 105 initiations in the corresponding period of 2005. China remains the most frequent subject of anti-dumping inquiries, accounting for 32 of the 87 new initiations, compared with 23 of 105 reported last year. Meanwhile, 15 members applied 71 new final anti-dumping measures during the six-month period, compared with 55 new measures applied during the same period in 2005—a 29% increase.